

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to address recent reports that I believe signal a conflict in Azeri President Ilham Aliyev's interest in promoting a peaceful resolution to the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

I am particularly troubled by reports from the BBC last week that President Aliyev said that, while he would continue to try to resolve the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict by peaceful means, the Azeri army is able at any moment to free what he called "our territory." The article continues that President Aliyev stated, "We have every right to do that, to restore our territorial integrity."

Such statements, Mr. Speaker, are unsettling and send a message to Armenia as well as to all those involved in working towards a peaceful resolution to the conflict that Azerbaijan is prepared to undertake a military approach to addressing the conflict should recommendations by the Minsk Group not agree with Azerbaijan's position. In fact, such statements, I believe, Mr. Speaker, send the wrong message to the Minsk Group and undermine ongoing efforts regarding stabilization of the South Caucasus region.

Ten years after a mutually signed cease-fire in the region and 3 years after President Kocharian and former President Aliyev came together at Key West, current Azeri President Aliyev has warned that if no concrete issues remain on the agenda regarding a peaceful resolution to Nagorno-Karabagh, then it is "not right to continue and imitate negotiations." President Aliyev's actions and statements do not signal a willingness to negotiate and, in fact, I think they illustrate the opposite. If there is any chance that the parties can move in the direction of a peaceful resolution, President Aliyev must show that he is willing to consider options developed by the Minsk Group without threatening military actions.

In this regard, I would like to highlight from the BBC article that Mr. Aliyev added that the Azeri government's expenditure on Azerbaijan's military was increasing each year and "it will keep increasing in the future." I am discouraged by this, Mr. Speaker, and I would like to address this issue in light of the U.S.'s role in providing military assistance in the region.

I strongly believe we must do everything in our power here in Congress to signal that we will not support the use of military force to address this conflict. Specifically, I call upon Congress and congressional appropriators to restore the military aid parity between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Earlier this year, President Bush's budget proposed including unequal military aid spending to Armenia and Azerbaijan. This request was contrary to a policy agreement between the Congress and the administration that there would be military parity between

the two countries. While the administration believes that the unequal funding will not destroy the balance between Azerbaijan and Armenia, I point to President Aliyev's recent statements and question the Bush administration's recent assurances to Congress before the other Chamber's Foreign Relations Committee.

I would like to point out that waiver language included in section 907 of the Freedom Support Act specifically states that any assistance to Azerbaijan should not be used to undermine or hamper the Karabakh peace process or be used for offensive purposes against Armenia or the Armenian communities in the South Caucasus. President Aliyev's comments regarding current and future increases in Azerbaijan's military funding do not put me at ease that funding from the U.S. either directly or indirectly will not be used to unleash a military campaign against the people of Nagorno-Karabagh.

Amid rising tension and animosity in the region, it is more important today than ever for the United States to be sure that no signal is sent suggesting that one side is being provided a military advantage over the other. Our strength in fostering a diplomatic and peaceful solution is our balanced approach to and for each nation of the South Caucasus. At this time the U.S. should not be providing resources to Azerbaijan that can in any measure be turned into military efforts against Armenia to reclaim Nagorno-Karabagh.

Parity in this regard will help to restore a sense of stability in the region and hopefully add to the U.S.'s evenhandedness in its presence and support for the establishment of a peaceful resolution to the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. McCOTTER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. McCOTTER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. PENCE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DREIER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. HINCHEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. HINCHEY addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE WAR ON TERRORISM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. HOEKSTRA) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Mr. Speaker, I am glad to be joined by my colleague from Georgia this evening. What we would like to do is to talk a little bit about the war on terrorism, the situation in Iraq, the situation in Afghanistan. We want to start off by providing an answer to some of our colleagues from the other side of the aisle who have been asking the question, In 2004, are we better off than we were 4 years ago? In many ways as we have talked about this issue, we need to recognize and put it in the context of September 11, 2001. For the first time, America has a real and serious response to the war on terrorism. During the 1990s, were we better off in the 1990s as we were attacked in the World Trade Centers in the early 1990s? As our embassies were attacked in Africa? As our barracks were attacked in Saudi Arabia? And as the USS *Cole* was attacked in Yemen, but America did not respond? Was that a good position for us to be in? We found out the cost of neglecting the threat, the emerging threat of global terrorism on September 11. We found out what it would cost us not to have responded during the 1990s.

As this threat emerged, an administration, perhaps even we in Congress, said, this is not a threat that needs a serious focus. We now have an administration, a President, and a Congress that were united in our response to September 11. We said we do face a real threat. We face a global war on terrorism. We face a global war on terrorism that had been emerging throughout the 1990s, but had never been responded to. Now is the time to respond because it is a real threat and it is a threat that we need to take seriously and it is a threat that we need to respond to by taking the war to the terrorists.

The question may not be, Is America better off? We know that America is probably safer than what we were on September 11 or on September 12, 2001. We know that America is much safer than what we were before September 11. We also recognize that we may be safer, but we are still not safe. But there are other questions that can be asked: Are the Afghan people better off today than they were 4 years ago? Are the people of Iraq better off than they were 4 years ago? Are the people in Libya facing a brighter future because of the decisions that have been made over the last few months than they were 4 years ago?

Tonight I do not claim that we have solved all of these problems or all of these issues. I think that we recognize that there is still a tremendous amount of work to do in each of these areas. But Afghanistan does have a new government. Afghanistan does have a new constitution. The Taliban is gone from power. They still exist in various forms of resistance. Al Qaeda no longer has a safe haven in Afghanistan to plan additional attacks against the United States and the rest of the free world. They are still planning those attacks, but the first thing that they have to plan each and every day is how they are going to get through that day. They no longer have the luxury of believing, and during the 1990s knowing, that America would not strike them, even though we knew where they were and we maybe had some idea of their overall intentions and that they had declared war on the United States that we would leave them alone.

So Afghanistan is freer and better off than they were. Saddam Hussein is no longer in power. As ugly as the abuses have been in the prisons by American troops, by a limited number of American troops, we cannot lose the perspective that probably over 300,000 Iraqis were driven to their graves through the brutality of the regime of Saddam Hussein.

Libya is now in the process of disarming. A couple of months ago, I had the opportunity to meet with Muammar Qaddafi in Libya. We tried to understand exactly why Qaddafi had made this switch in strategy, why from being on a list of terrorist states he had evolved to a position where now he was disclaiming any terrorist intent, working with the United States and working with the European Union to disarm, but not only to disarm from weapons of mass destruction but to disclose to the United States and others the capabilities that he had in his nuclear weapons program, which is a step forward, to also not only describe what his program was and to give us many of the materials but also to give us an understanding as to how he had acquired those materials and what was the network of suppliers that facilitated the development of his nuclear weapons program.

As we better understand that network, we also get a clearer picture of

what maybe exists today in Iran, what may exist in North Korea as they were on the market shopping for nuclear weapons programs.

So are these three countries and the people in these countries better off? The 50 million people alone in Afghanistan and Iraq that have been liberated from terrorist regimes, are they better off than what they were 4 years ago? Are the people of Libya better off in the new course that their leader has embarked on? I think the answer is very, very clear. The answer is absolutely yes. Is America safer because of a change in regimes in Afghanistan, Libya, and Iraq? I think the answer is clear. It is an absolute yes.

Again I am not saying that the work is done. As we see in the media, as we get in our briefings each and every day, there is still a tremendous amount of work that needs to be done. But we cannot forget the unity that this Nation had after September 11, a unity that said we need to stare terrorism in its face and we need to stare it down and we need to take the battle to the terrorists. That was the message that came from the White House. But that was also the message that was embraced by this Congress and supported by this Congress.

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What we need to recognize is that going to war and rebuilding or building representative government or new governments in each of these countries is not an easy process. We maybe had a quick major conflict, a McDonald's war, but when we get done with it, we recognize that building a new Iraq and a new Afghanistan is going to take a tremendous amount of time. And that is the process that we are embarking on today.

But take a look at what has happened. It is progress. Afghanistan is free. Libya has disarmed. Saddam Hussein is no longer in power. Iraq is becoming a free country, making the heart of the Middle East more stable and, therefore, making America more secure. We are more secure because we now have a Department of Homeland Security. Is all the work in the Department of Homeland Security complete? Absolutely not. We do not create that type of an agency and give them that type of a mission and believe in 12 to 18 months that all of that work is going to be completed.

But we now have a Department of Homeland Security that is focused on making sure that our airports are more secure, making sure that our ports are more secure, making sure that our local communities are more secure, because we are developing an infrastructure, a database that allows information-sharing across all levels of government so that we will be more prepared to identify the threats that we face and hopefully to respond to those threats in such a way that a threat never becomes a successful attack on America.

All of our border activities have been consolidated into the Department of

Homeland Security, a single agency, doing away with a multitude of different organizations that allowed in some cases the opportunities for some of the 9/11 hijackers to slip through our borders, to rent apartments, to find employment and to train in flight schools, only to have their visas approved by INS after they carried out the attacks on the Twin Towers.

So we are facing the issues that have been identified and moving forward, moving forward in a very difficult process because America is still a free country. And that is exactly what we want to maintain. We want to maintain a free society, but we want to maintain a society that is free and safe. Those are the two paths that we are continuing to try to balance.

I do not know if the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY) has any comments. There are lots of things we want to talk about, but I think this is kind of set in context to answer that first question: Are we better off? Absolutely. We recognize the threat that this Nation faces. We are addressing that threat, and we are working and focusing on that real threat each and every day. We do not claim absolute security and safety, but we do now recognize the threat and continue to work to try to make sure that we will not have another terrorist attack in the United States.

I yield to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY).

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I certainly thank the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. HOEKSTRA) for organizing this Special Order tonight.

Mr. Speaker, we are here to pay tribute really to the courage, the commitment, and the endurance of our service men and women. And specifically I would like to spend a few moments kind of reflecting on the tremendous job that our troops have been doing in Iraq.

We must never forget that our American forces are primarily responsible for one of the most complex and awesome military successes in history. And the overwhelming majority of our troops did it with compassion, with care for the dignity and the basic human rights of the Iraqi people.

Remember that our military, our military, liberated 25 million Iraqi citizens in just over 3 short weeks. And when we include Afghanistan, American troops have now liberated over 50 million people from oppressive regimes.

Yet despite this military success story, Mr. Speaker, I cannot think of another time in which so much precious time and treasure have been invested in the reconstruction of another country. An international coalition led by America is now building new, modern power plants, a totally new phone system, and nearly 2,500 schools.

Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Michigan I know has been to Iraq several times, has been to Afghanistan, been to Libya. He has seen what I saw

the one opportunity that I had to visit Iraq just before Christmas of 2003, and at that time Fallujah was a little more peaceful than it is today. And I remember General Swanick took us on a patrol. We were in a situation where things were relatively stable. We obviously could not do that today, but we went in those Humvees with those soldiers of the 101st, and we visited a school, which by our standards, Mr. Speaker, one probably would not want their child in a building that has no air conditioning and no heat. It is lighted, but there is not a nice playground or anything like that. But, by golly, there is a chalkboard, and those kids were there and not only little male children but of course for the first time probably in 30 years little precious female children were able to get an education. They were sitting there. They were bright eyed, and they were hopeful. And that is what we were doing in Fallujah before Sadr and all of these terrorist thugs started killing everybody just wantonly and the mass destruction that is going on there right now.

But, I mean, this is the kind of thing that we were doing. More than 8.7 million textbooks have been printed and distributed throughout Iraq; 32,000 secondary school teachers and administrative staff have been trained to teach Iraqi children; 240 hospitals; 1,200 health clinics. Health care spending in Iraq has increased 30 times over its prewar. Five million children have been immunized for measles, mumps, and rubella. That is because of the liberation and the compassion that this country has brought to Iraq.

And I know the gentleman from Michigan has seen so much of that and agrees with me that the good stories are not being told. All of us are appalled with the activity of a miscreant few in that Abu Ghraib prison there in Baghdad and what they did is unforgivable. There is no excuse for that, and they will pay the price.

But it is a shame that we have got 165,000 brave men and women serving in Iraq and Afghanistan and 25,000 coalition forces that are laying it on the line and indeed sometimes paying the ultimate sacrifice to do the right thing, and that is the message that of course does not get the soundbites on this 24-hour news that we have to literally put up with every day in this country. But we are here tonight, and I am just so pleased to have an opportunity. I thank the gentleman from Michigan for allowing me to join with him and talk about the good things that we are doing, and at the end of the day we will succeed in this mission.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his comments.

I want to again talk a little bit about the war that we are in. The Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence, Steve Cambone, gave a speech back in January that I think kind of describes the challenges that we face as a Nation. And as we talk about the progress

that we make in Iraq, as we talk about the progress that we make in Afghanistan, we cannot lose context of the total situation that we face as a Nation. And here is how the Under Secretary described it: "We are a Nation at war. We do not know how long it will last, but it is unlikely to be short. We cannot know where or against whom all of its battles will be fought. There are multiple fronts in this war, and there is no single theatre of operations. We do know that we are all at risk, at home and abroad, civilians and military alike. We do know that battles and campaigns will both be conventional and unconventional in their conduct. Some of those battles and campaigns will be fought in the open, and others will be fought in secret where our victories will be known to only a few."

Going on in his speech he says: "We are facing a turbulent and volatile world populated by a number of highly adaptive state and nonstate actors. Some of these are weighing whether, to what extent, or how they might oppose the interests of the United States and its friends. Others such as the terrorist organizations responsible for attacks on the United States, Turkey, Indonesia, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Kenya, the Philippines, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, and other places have committed themselves to war."

I think this gives us some idea as to the full context of the threat that we face and the number of different places that we face that threat.

He also goes on to say: "It is impossible to predict with confidence what nation or entity will pose a threat in 5, 10, or 20 years to the United States or to our friends and allies."

His speech goes on: "But not everything that unfolds in the coming years should be a surprise." Here is what we can expect: "We can expect that an adversary will continuously search for effective means to attack our people, our economy, military and political power, and the people in power of our friends and allies. We can also expect that an adversary will have access to a range of modern technologies and will be prepared to use them to magnify the destructiveness of their attacks, using truck bombs and improvised explosives, cyberintrusions to attack the computer systems upon which we rely, radio transmitters to jam our space assets, small laboratories to develop new and biological or genetically altered agents, and chemical and nuclear technology materials delivered by missile, plane, boat, or backpack to poison our environment and destroy human lives."

Here is what candidate Bush said in 1999, perhaps better understanding that threat than the administration at that point: "Now our President reminded his audience of an earlier time when a free people confronted what he called 'rapid change and momentous choices.' That time was the 1930s. Nazi Germany was rearming, and the British Govern-

ment was reluctant to take forceful steps to stave off war. To give voice to his own concerns, candidate Bush quoted Winston Churchill, who repeatedly called upon his countrymen to respond to the gathering storm."

Here is what candidate Bush said and quoted from Winston Churchill: "'The era of procrastination, of half-measures, of soothing and baffling expedients, of delays, is coming to a close,' Churchill said. 'In its place we are entering a period of consequences.' That period of consequences arrived not only for the military but for those who practiced intelligence just 2 years after the President's Citadel speech on September 11, 2001. Like our colleagues in the military forces, we will be judged by our successors on our response to this period of consequences. We face few substantial impediments to transforming intelligence. We are led by individuals at the Department of Defense and agencies who embrace the need for and who likewise are committed to this effort. Congress has provided the resources."

What we see is a true response. "There is an urgency to transform intelligence, defining and achieving operational goals." But what we will not see and what we have not seen from this President, what we perhaps saw during the 1990s and what the folks in Great Britain saw in the 1930s, what they saw and what we perhaps saw, the British Government, the U.S. Government in the 1990s was reluctant to take forceful steps to stave off war. Again: "The era of procrastination, of half measures, of soothing and baffling expedients, of delays, is coming to a close. In its place we are entering a period of consequences."

That was the end of the quote from Winston Churchill. It was the end of an era where we had delays and baffling expediency.

What this President has provided us is an era of leadership, strategically. There can be differences on the tactics. We have done things wrong. Mistakes have been made. It is always great in hindsight to identify a mistake, 20/20 vision, saying we should have done that 2 years ago or we should have done that 3 months ago, and we are second guessing our military commanders in the field, but what we do have is we have a clear sense of vision and commitment to move forward and to get this done. That is what this President has provided. Strategically we are headed in the right direction. Tactically we have got some work to do.

I yield to the gentleman from Georgia.

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Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I want to thank him, too, I really appreciate the historical perspective that he brings to this debate, because we learn from our history. God help us if we do not learn from our history. We repeat the same mistakes.

But the bottom line here is, as the gentleman from Michigan was explaining at the top of the hour, we had 10 years, we had a lot of time, where the gentleman mentioned the USS *Cole*, the Marine barracks in Lebanon, the embassies, and it goes on and on. What did we do? It was a series of drawing a line in the sand, and let me suggest not a very deep one, and a series of double-dog-dare-you.

And what happened? The Twin Towers attack on September 11, 2001. I want to remind, Mr. Speaker, all of my colleagues, that that indeed was not the first attack. It happened in 1993. And what did we do? It is just like, you bomb an aspirin factory?

The gentleman from Michigan put it in such great perspective. We are hearing from the other side, and you are going to hear it for the next 6 months of this presidential election year, we know it, we have heard it, we have heard all about campaign rhetoric, are you better off than you were 4 years ago? They are trying to borrow a phrase from a great president, President Reagan. And what a wonderful job he did, probably one of the greatest presidents we ever had.

I will tell you, like the gentleman from Michigan said, we are better off than we were 4 years ago. But it is not so much important are we better off, but the world is better off. The world is a better place. It is kind of like borrowing from Charles Dickens in the Tale of Two Cities, on that first page, the first paragraph, when he said, it is the worst of times, it is the best of times.

Well, in many ways it is the worst of times. It is always a bad time, a very bad time when we are losing men and women who are paying the ultimate sacrifice defending this country. Even though we agree with Thomas Jefferson when he said that every now and then the Tree of Liberty has to be nourished again by the blood of patriots.

That is what is going on today. Those are the worst of times, but they are the best of times, because we, by the grace of God, have a Commander-in-Chief, a leader of this country, that is a man of faith, a God-fearing President with resolute determination, and he will lead this country out of the morass that we find ourselves in, because it is the right thing to do.

I am so appreciative for having an opportunity to share a little time with the gentleman from Michigan, because the story needs to be told.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Reclaiming my time, we talk about are we better off. Think about it. It is 1995–1996. We have been attacked a few different times in a few different places around the globe. We know that the organization that is attacking us is a terrorist organization. It is not a nation state, so it does not have a defined boundary. It does not have buildings that you could go and occupy or you could declare war on.

So, what is the response that we have in the intelligence community in 1995–1996? We may have talked about this the last time we had an opportunity to do a special order. It is the called the Deutch Doctrine. Deutch was the head of the CIA during that time.

Are we better off? Well, the response to terrorist organizations, to the uncertainty in Iraq, Saddam was in there. A few years later he kicked out the UN inspectors and continued to flaunt the different resolutions that came out of the UN.

What was the response in the intelligence community to what was a growing and emerging threat? It was the Deutch Doctrine, which says, well, if you are in the field in the CIA and you are thinking about recruiting spies, if they have any human rights violations or they have a criminal record, they really need to go through a special screening process. And, by the way, we do not really want to do business with those kinds of folks. So if you want a career-ending move, send us a bunch of folks that have questionable backgrounds and tell us you would like to recruit them to be spies. In effect, we closed down our human intelligence.

We took a look at what was going on in Iraq prior to the war and what was going on there the last few years. We have excellent imagery from space. We can see buildings and we can see trucks and people moving around, but we do not know what is actually in the building. We can guess. We do not know exactly what is on the minds of the people. Are they stockpiling and producing weapons of mass destruction, or have they decided that they will put the facilities in place that once the UN is out? Do they think, we can produce the stuff in massive quantities in a very short period of time, a just-in-time inventory? We could not understand their strategy, because we went blind on the human intelligence side.

We went worse than that. We went through a process in the CIA that scrubbed the folks that were working for the CIA. What does that mean? Not only were we not going to recruit any more of these folks, but we also said, let us go through and see if we have any kind of these people working for us, and, if we do have these people working for us, it is time to cut them off.

My colleague and I, we know enough about al Qaeda, we know about the other kinds of terrorist organizations, we know enough about Saddam Hussein. The question is, what do you think the profile is? How many of the Eagle Scouts that we said we would only recruit to work for the CIA were in the tent with bin Laden or in one of the palaces with Saddam?

Mr. GINGREY. That is exactly right. As the gentleman said, back in the previous administration, they scrubbed it to the extent that if you had ever had a history of spitting on the sidewalk or jaywalking, you were ineligible to

work for the CIA or work in our intelligence.

You have got to fight fire with fire. These are bad guys. When you think of somebody in retaliation, as they might say, or retribution, because we had a few miscreants mistreating, horribly mistreating, and we do not condone that, in one cell block in Abu Ghraib prison in Baghdad, so, tit-for-tat, you chop off the head of a 26-year-old young man who is in Baghdad, who has a history of being compassionate and wanting to help people and do the right thing and maybe restore some communication networks in Iraq. That is what we are dealing with.

So, it is absolutely right. We fell asleep at the switch. But not in this administration. Not on this watch and this president. He immediately responded after 9/11 and told us, and reminded us, this war against terrorism, this is not going to end with the capture of Osama bin Laden. This does not end because we have found Saddam Hussein. He told us 2½ years ago that this war on terrorism is a global war, and it is something that is going to be with us for a long time.

These oceans no longer protect us. It is easy for people to forget.

I want to make one other point, if the gentleman from Michigan will allow me a little bit more time. You know, somebody told me today, I did not realize this, but I went to a movie recently, the premier of “Ike,” starring Tom Selleck, a great movie about the lead-up to Normandy, Operation Overlord, and the agony, of course, they went through in trying to time that mission and train the troops on the coast of England.

I did not realize that they actually practiced the invasion of Normandy there on the beaches in England. Of course, a lot of live fire was used practicing that invasion to make sure they got it just right, and over 700 of our soldiers were killed practicing for Normandy, for D-Day, because they were using live fire. There were some accidents that occurred, but we lost over 700 soldiers in the preparation for Normandy.

What if the our Greatest Generation, what if we were in a digital world back then and all that news got out to the 24 hour news network, and, oh my God, what would have happened? Maybe D-Day never would have occurred.

I realize, of course, we have lost over 700 by comparison, maybe 800 now in Iraq and Afghanistan, but we need to put it in perspective. If you ask the Greatest Generation, what should be our exit strategy in Iraq, they would quickly tell you the exit strategy is to win; to win. You do not pull your team off in the fourth quarter because the going gets tough. That is when the tough get going. That is with what made that generation the Greatest Generation.

I think today we may have an even greater generation with these young men and women, these 135,000, 140,000

active component, Guard and Reserve over there laying it on the line for us, spilling their blood to nourish that Tree of Liberty. It makes me very proud of them, and humble as a Member of Congress.

But we have got to stay the course. We have got to continue to, as the gentleman from Michigan has said, to let the American people understand, to know, to put this in the right perspective.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Reclaiming my time, one of the things we wanted to do tonight, we wanted to talk a little bit about the young men and women who are serving in Iraq. We have a list of many who have received the Distinguished Service Cross or the Bronze Star and those types of things. Maybe we will read some of those citations.

But today in USA Today there was a story entitled "A Marine sees what defeatists do not." This is a young man who is now serving his third deployment with the 1st Marine Division in the Middle East, Ben Connable.

Here is one of the things he talked about when he first went in 1991. "Waiting for war in the Saudi Arabian desert as a young corporal in 1991, I recall reading news clippings portending massive tank battles, fiery death from Saddam Hussein's 'flame trenches' and bitter defeat at the hands of the fourth largest army in the world. My platoon was told to expect 75 percent casualties. Being Marines and, therefore, naturally cocky, we still felt pretty good about our abilities.

"The panicky predictions failed to come true. The flame trenches sputtered. Nobody from my platoon died. Strength, ingenuity and willpower won the day. Crushing the fourth largest army in the world in four days seemed to crush the doubts back home.

"Twelve years passed, during which time America was faced with frustrating actions in Somalia and the Balkans. Doubt had begun to creep back into public debate.

"In the spring of last year, I was a Marine captain, back with the division for Operation Iraqi Freedom. As I waited for war in the desert just 100 miles to the north from our stepping-off point in 1991, I was again subjected to the panicky analysis of talking heads. There weren't enough troops to do the job, the oil fields would be destroyed, we could not fight in urban terrain, our offensive would grind to a halt, and we should expect more than 10,000 casualties.

"Remembering my experience in Desert Storm, I took these assessments with a grain of salt. As a staff officer in the division command post, I was able to follow the larger battle as we moved forwards. I knew that our tempo was keeping the enemy on his heels and that our plan would lead us to victory.

"But war is never clean and simple. Mourning our losses quietly, the Marines drove to Baghdad, then to Tikrit, liberating the Iraqi people while losing fewer men than were lost in Desert Storm."

Then he talks about on March 30 he was reading a U.S. newspaper that was in one of the packages that he had received. The stories in the paper: "Horror in Nassariyah, faltering supply lines and demonstrations in Cairo. The mood of the paper was impenetrably gloomy, and predictions of disaster abounded. The offensive was stalled; everyone was running out of supplies; we would be forced to withdraw.

"The Arab world was about to ignite into a fireball of rage, and the Middle East was on the verge of collapse. If I read those stories on March 30, I would have had a tough time either restraining my laughter or, conversely, falling into a funk. I was concerned about the bizarre kaleidoscope image of Iraq presented to the American people by writers viewing the world through a soda straw," not taking a look at the total picture.

He now says, "As I write this, the supply lines are open, there is plenty of ammunition and food, the Sunni Triangle is back to status quo, and Sadr is marginalized in Najaf. Once again, dire predictions of failure and disaster have been dismissed by America's willpower and military professionalism.

"War is inherently ugly and dramatic. I do not blame reporters for focusing on the burning vehicles, the mutilated bodies or the personal tragedies. These things sell news and remind us of the sober reality of our commitment to the Iraqi people. The actions of our armed forces are rightfully subject to scrutiny.

"As a professional, I have the luxury of putting politics aside and focusing on the task at hand. Protecting people from terrorists and criminals while building schools and lasting friendships is a good mission, no matter what brush it is tarred with."

□ 2230

Think about it. This is what one of our soldiers said there. And I have heard this story over and over and over, if you talk to our troops when they are coming back, whether you are in your district or they are in the airport, and you go up to them and say, Thank you.

Here is why they are, I think, overwhelmingly positive because this is what they see their mission as, and they know that when they are doing this mission, they are also doing a mission which protects you and I and our constituents.

Here is how he described it: "Protecting people from terrorists and criminals while building schools and lasting friendships is a good mission no matter what brush it is tarred with. Nothing any talking head will say can deter me or my fellow Marines from caring about the people of Iraq or take away from the sacrifices of our comrades. Fear in the face of adversity is human nature, and many people who take counsel with their fears speak today. We are not deaf to their cries. Neither do we take heed."

His closing two sentences are absolutely awesome. This is one of our young men who is over there with the Iraq people each and every day. He is not talking about in Iraq where the people, as we sometimes perceive in the media, where all the Iraqis and all the people of Islam, hate Americans. Here is what he says, and think about this; this is a soldier who is representing the troops that are putting their lives on the line each and every day. "All we ask is that Americans stand by us by supporting not just the troops, but also the mission." And then I guess as any Marine would say, Here is how he closes. "We will take care of the rest."

Mr. GINGREY. The gentleman is wearing a poppy in his lapel as most of us did today. He continues to wear his, and I am proud of him for that.

Memorial Day is coming up pretty soon, and we all know the symbol of the poppy. And we passed a resolution today honoring those who have served. Our country is almost 230 years old. We have had a lot of conflicts, and that poppy represents our tribute to the fallen many in multiple conflicts.

I cannot help but think about that poem at a time like this that was written by a physician, a surgeon, a Canadian, Doc McCrae, when his best friend was killed in Flanders, Belgium, and buried on their hallowed ground where those poppies grow. It was inspiration to Dr. McCrae to write that poem that we all know so well today.

Mr. Speaker, I am not sure my memory reciting poetry is that good, but I do remember that last stanza is, a short poem, a very short poem. It went something like:

"Take up our quarrel with the foe, to you from failing hands we pass the torch, be yours to hold it high, for if you break faith with us who die, we shall not sleep, though poppies grow in Flanders Field."

Mr. Speaker, it says it all. It is just what the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. HOEKSTRA) was referring to. We owe such a debt of gratitude to these brave men and women who have paid it, an ultimate sacrifice, to those soldiers at Walter Reed or at Bethesda who are over there trying to rehabilitate and get used to wearing those prostheses because they have lost a limb or maybe multiple limbs.

It is very easy to stand here in the House, and sometimes some of our colleagues are awfully critical in talking again about the exit strategy, and we will probably hear some of that later on tonight from the other side. But I think that is absolutely despicable when these men and women, no matter what the cause, have paid that price.

You go back and you talk about the Civil War, you talk about the Korean conflict, you talk about Vietnam where we lost 58,000 men and some women in that conflict. But let me, if I can, just to kind of put it in perspective to bring some reality to it.

Yeah, we had some thugs running that cell block in Abu Ghraib that no

matter how much training they may have received, there is no excuse, because what they did, it does not take \$50,000 worth of military training to teach them that it is wrong. Any Boy Scout or Girl Scout that follows the creed and knows the Scout oath would never, would never do a thing like that.

But let me just talk a little bit about one, just one of the brave many who serve and, in this particular instance, paid the ultimate sacrifice for his country and does it the right way. Listen to this, Mr. Speaker.

"The President of the United States takes pride in presenting the Silver Star posthumously to Gunnery Sergeant Jeffrey E. Bohr, Jr., United States Marine Corps, for service as set forth in the following citation:

"For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action against the enemy while serving as Company Gunnery Sergeant, Company A, 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 5, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom on 10 April 2003. With his company assigned the dangerous mission of seizing a presidential palace in Baghdad and concerned that logistical resupply might be slow in reaching his comrades once they reached the objective, Gunnery Sergeant Bohr selflessly volunteered to move in his two soft-skinned vehicles with the company's main armored convoy. While moving through narrow streets toward the main objective, the convoy took intense small arms and rocket-propelled grenade fire. Throughout this movement, Gunnery Sergeant Bohr delivered accurate, effective fires on the enemy, while encouraging his Marines and supplying critical information to his company commander.

"When the lead vehicles of the convoy reached a dead end and were subjected to enemy fire, Gunnery Sergeant Bohr continued to boldly engage the enemy while calmly maneuvering his Marines to safety. Upon learning of a wounded Marine in a forward vehicle, Gunnery Sergeant Bohr immediately coordinated medical treatment and evacuation. Moving to the position of the injured Marine, Gunnery Sergeant Bohr continued to lay down a high volume of suppressive fire, while simultaneously guiding the medical evacuation vehicle, until he was mortally wounded by enemy fire.

"By his bold leadership, wise judgment, and complete dedication to duty, Gunnery Sergeant Bohr reflected great credit upon himself and upheld the highest tradition of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service."

God bless him, Mr. Speaker. We all need to remember people like Gunnery Sergeant Jeffrey Bohr.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. I thank my colleague. We have a long list of folks who have served heroically in Iraq and Afghanistan. In my own district I have had two young men who were killed in Iraq, Steve Hewlett and Todd Robbins.

Again, I want the folks in the district and in the country to recognize that, as

was described in USA Today, the work that Steve and Todd were engaged in was protecting people from terrorists and criminals while building schools and lasting friendships, a good mission no matter what brush it is tarred with and no matter how other people try to paint that picture.

Ridding the world of Saddam Hussein was the right thing to do, just as they are protecting people from terrorists in Iraq and Afghanistan and other places. As we eliminate terrorists in Iraq and Afghanistan and other places, we also have to remember that the larger goal and objective of these terrorist organizations is not to terrorize the people of Iraq, not to terrorize the people of Afghanistan. They were already doing that. Their larger goal was to build a network to terrorize the rest of the world.

We felt on September 11 that the terrorists that were based in Afghanistan attacked the United States. The people in Israel and other parts of the Middle East have felt it for years, as Saddam Hussein exported terrorism and paid bounties and cash bonuses to the families of suicide bombers in Israel. There is no doubt that these nations and the leadership in these countries were actively engaged in a global war on terrorism.

For them, it was only a matter of time before they would have taken those resources and expanded that to continue to attack U.S. interests in the Middle East, in Europe and other parts of the world, but also to take that battle to the United States.

When we talk about some of the other things that have happened in Iraq, Jim Hoffman, an individual from my district, served 8 or 9 months in Iraq, served as the Minister of Health; on April 1 the Ministry of Health was turned over to the Iraqis. Today, health care is not being provided by the coalition. Health care is now being provided by Iraqis.

There is a Ministry of Education, teachers' salaries \$120 a month; entry level salaries have gone from \$5 a month to \$66 a month. The Minister of Public Works and Municipalities established programs to rehabilitate 14 water treatment plants.

The Ministry of Science and Technology has taken the lead in establishing the foundation for E-government in Iraq. The Ministry of Culture has revitalized the national symphony orchestra, begun clearing Iraq's library collection.

The Ministry of Agriculture is rehabilitating Iraq's agriculture colleges to carry forward Iraq's long agricultural history of displacement and migration. The Ministry of Water Resources cleared over 17,000 kilometers of irrigation canals.

So there is a tremendous amount of work, and as I talk to our troops that come back, one of the things that frustrates them is that the bad news is what is focused on here. Many of the troops that I talk to say they do not

even watch the news anymore when they come home. They do not watch it when they are in Iraq because what they see on the news they say is not reflective of what they see while they are on the ground in Iraq. These are the kinds of things that are not talked about.

I think my colleague and I, we are not denying that the bad things, they are happening, but again I think as Ben Conable pointed out in his article in USA Today, and this is a person that is there in his third tour, he says, the media is looking at Iraq through a straw, not giving the total picture.

Mr. GINGREY. The gentleman is so right. He referred earlier about the McDonald's mentality. Of course, meaning no disrespect to a great company. Just suggesting at that time "quick fix," the fast delivery which that company is so well respected for, that is just not what happens in a situation like we are in in Iraq. And in the 24-hour news networks, of course, it is one sound bite after another.

And as the gentleman said, and I asked when I was in Iraq, I asked some of the soldiers, and unfortunately, when they get a break from those patrols or they are in those Humvees, whether they are up-armored or after-market armored or unarmored and they are on those dangerous missions. They probably go 12, 14-hour, 16-hour shifts and they get back to the billet and maybe they have access to relax, knowing that they have to go back out the next day and do it all over again and every day their lives are at risk. So sure they watch television. And it is just unbelievable what they are seeing and the discouragement.

God forbid if they are tuning into some of the coverage of what they hear here in the halls of Congress; you would think that they would get a little bit discouraged. It is funny how sometimes you hear the opposition say, Oh, we support the troops. The troops we love. They are brave men and women. We support the troops, but, hey, you know, the coach sucks.

You just put it in perspective of a high school football team. If the booster club says, We want the boys to go out there. We love them. They are doing a great job, but we do not like the coach. We question all the plays. Pretty soon it gets down to the players and they are not going to win too many games that season and that is what you are seeing here, that sort of thing.

The Iraqi people, they were not as fortunate as we were in this great country called the United States of America. We were born to freedom.

□ 2245

Our Forefathers bought and paid for that, and certainly all of us today never knew anything different. We have freedom of press, freedom of religion, freedom of speech. We take it for granted, unfortunately.

These people, the Iraqi people, the 25 million most of whom are good people.

They have never known that. So it is going to take a long time, Mr. Speaker, for them to understand, to get the feel of that, and yet we hear from the other side, well, Mr. President, what is your exit strategy. Indeed, indeed.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, there was an editorial today by William Safire in the New York Times, and it is kind of an interesting thing because what he talks about today, "In this rush to misjudgment, we can see an example of the 'Four Noes' that have become the defeatists' platform."

"The first 'no' is no stockpiles of WMD, used to justify the war, were found." He goes on to say what we may find is "the successful concealment of WMD, as well as pre-war shipments thereof to Syria." I think what most likely happened is that Saddam moved away from stockpiling weapons of mass destruction to putting in place plans "for production and missile delivery," but that is my own conjecture, "by Saddam's Special Republican Guard and Fedayeen, as part of his planned guerrilla war."

This is what Safire goes on to say. "The present story line of 'Saddam was stupid, fooled by his generals' would then be replaced by 'Saddam was shrewder than we thought.'"

"Defeatism's second 'no' is no connection was made between Saddam and al Qaeda or any of its terrorist affiliates. This is asserted as revealed truth with great fervor."

Now we see, going on in the article that he wrote today, "most damning is the rise to terror's top rank of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, who escaped Afghanistan to receive medical treatment in Baghdad. He joined Ansar al-Islam, a Qaeda offshoot whose presence in Iraq to murder Kurds at Saddam's behest was noted in this space in the weeks after 9/11. His activity in Iraq was cited by President Bush 6 months before our invasion. Osama's disciple Zarqawi is now thought to be the televised beheading of a captive American."

"The third 'no' is no human-rights high ground can be claimed by us regarding Saddam's torture chambers because we mistreated Iraqi prisoners. This equates sleep deprivation with life deprivation, illegal individual humiliation with official mass murder. We flagellate ourselves for mistreatment by a few of our guards, who will be punished; he delightedly oversaw the shoveling of 300,000 innocent Iraqis into unmarked graves." He goes on to say, "Iraqis know the difference."

"The fourth 'no' is no Arab nature is culturally ready for political freedom and our attempt to impose democracy in Iraq is arrogant Wilsonian idealism."

"In coming years, this will be blasted by revisionist supporters as an ignoble ethnic-racist slur. Iraqis will gain the power, with our help, to put down the terrorists and find their own brand of political equilibrium."

"Will today's defeatists then admit they were wrong?" Safire goes on to

say, he answers that question with, "That's a fifth 'no.'"

Once a defeatist always a defeatist. I yield to my colleague.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I just want to thank the gentleman for bringing this hour to our colleagues in the House on both sides of the aisle and for giving me an opportunity to share with him this time because it is so important.

Mr. Speaker, it is so important for not just American people but for those men and women who are over there in harm's way defending our freedom and liberty and allowing us to sleep well at night and to hopefully bring in peace, democracy, liberty, freedom that we enjoy, that we take for granted, to the people in the Middle East.

I think that we just need to remember that our every waking hour and never forget what they are doing for us and we are doing the right thing, and I thank the gentleman from Michigan for being courageous to bring this time to the American people, but especially to those men and women who maybe, yes, they just came off patrol from Fallujah or the Sunni triangle or hottest of the hot spots in Iraq, and they take that backpack off and that body armor off and they take off their boots and they relax a little bit and they turn on the television and hopefully maybe they are watching what we are saying tonight, and I hope they are because they need to know that people like the gentleman from Michigan, a distinct leader in this 108th Congress, we believe in them and we are going to support them, and we are going to stick with them, and we are going to see them to the end, and we are going to have victory for the world, not just for the United States of America.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I want to just close again by going back to the article that was written by Ben Connable from Ramadi, Iraq. Remember, this is his third deployment, and when we talk about the voices of defeatism, as Safire talks about it in the New York Times today, these guys hear that message.

He says doubt had begun to creep back into the public debate. He sees and hears that now. He saw it when they were talking what about was going on in the Sunni triangle and what really is going on. He knows and admits that war is inherently ugly and dramatic, but here is again what he said.

"But as a professional, I have the luxury of putting politics aside and focusing on the task at hand. Protecting people from terrorists and criminals while building schools and lasting friendships is a good mission, no matter what brush it's tarred with."

"Nothing any talking head will say can deter me or my fellow Marines from caring about the people of Iraq," and I would say they are there because they know that by caring for the people of Iraq or Afghanistan, they know that they are caring for the people of

the United States, "or take away from the sacrifices of our comrades. Fear in the face of adversity is human nature, and many people who take the counsel of their fears speak today. We are not deaf to their cries; neither do we take heed."

A simple request from Major Ben Connable is this. "All we ask is that Americans stand by us by supporting not just the troops, but also the mission. We'll take care of the rest."

WHO INVESTIGATES THE INVESTIGATORS?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BRADLEY of New Hampshire). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. McDERMOTT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, today a 24-year-old Army Reserve specialist was sentenced to do a year in jail, reduction in rank and dishonorable discharge for his role in the Abu Ghraib prison scandal. What would his sentence have been if this soldier had served as judge, jury, prosecution and defense? Indeed, would there have been any charges filed at all if the 24-year-old soldier had investigated himself? Of course not. It would be justice denied.

Yet that is exactly what the military commanders and civilian leaders at the Pentagon are trying to pull off.

Yesterday, before a Senate committee, Lieutenant General Ricardo Sanchez, the top military commander in Iraq, vowed that the scandal would be investigated up the chain of command, including himself.

At a time when the world must see that no one in the U.S. is above the law, the Pentagon arrogantly acts as if it answers only to itself. The first low-ranking soldier was thrown overboard today. Other low-ranking soldiers will soon follow.

This is how Secretary Rumsfeld, Lieutenant General Sanchez and all of their minions define justice. Do as I say, not as I do. The world is watching, and the world is not buying the Pentagon justice charade.

Outside the courtroom today, an Iraqi civilian told the Associate Press, "Those who are executing the laws and orders are not the problem. Punishment of the officials who gave the orders is what matters."

More than anything else, these court-martials may just reinforce the mistrust and resentment against the United States throughout the Arab world.

The way the proceedings are being handled is under fire. The Pentagon allowed media to attend the court-martial but television cameras were barred, even as representatives from Middle East networks demanded access.

Apparently, it is okay for the President to go on Arab television but it is not okay for the Arab world to see an